

rheumatism, the extension or repression of which disease is, perhaps, one of its most frequently exciting causes.

The symptoms from the first were well marked, and require no comment. Upon what the permanent irregularity of the pulse in the right radial artery depended, I am not prepared to say, the stethoscope did not indicate either cardiac or arterial disease; it arose, in all probability, from local pressure upon the artery, but in what part of its course this obtained, repeated examination failed to elicit.

In the treatment, in addition to the other remedies, I am disposed to attribute a large share of the benefit derived to the free use of opium; and this leads me to allude briefly to the question lately brought before the Association,—viz., "The treatment of internal inflammation, by opium," an important practical subject, and one which I trust that we shall sooner or later see discussed in the pages of our Journal, by not a few only of its many talented members. Without entering upon the theory of the action which opium exerts upon healthy and diseased organs, I can most fully assent to the opinions which have been recently expressed by Drs. Chambers and Ranking, in reference to its utility in the treatment of many cases of acute internal inflammation. The power of allaying pain, subduing nervous excitability, and thereby reducing the irritability of the heart's action, peculiarly belongs to this drug; and however difficult or impossible it may be to instance, by writing, those particular conditions in which its adoption is so generally followed by benefit, still how vividly will the reflecting physician, unshackled by hypothetical notions, revert to the satisfactory results which in his hands have attended its use.

In the selection of the cases most requiring the opium treatment, as also the precise period at which this medicine is called for, (and this is all important,) medical tact and observant experience can alone direct. A volume upon the subject would, in many instances, utterly fail to indicate the peculiar circumstances requiring opium, but in which to give it is recovery to the patient,—to withhold it is probable destruction; and who cannot call to mind the look of gratitude beaming in the countenance of the sufferer relieved, if not rendered out of danger, by the timely and judicious exhibition of this valuable drug. Independently of those diseases in the treatment of which opium is commonly prescribed, as delirium tremens and some other nervous affections, there exist others, in which at one period or other of their course, the exhibition of opiates is attended with the happiest results.

In the second stage of pneumonia, if the cough be constant and harassing, the expectoration scanty, and the countenance anxious, with an exalted state of nervous sensibility, full doses of opium at bed-time often act like a charm. In pleurisy, prior to effusion, the same medicine administered at night, giving mercury *per se* during the day, is equally valuable. If effusion obtain, the balance of the circulation is often so much interfered with, that the propriety of opium, in these cases, becomes questionable. In

rheumatism, the best effects result from opiates; but in this disease, as in pleurisy, I believe that more benefit will be derived from administering opium in full doses at night, with mercury during the day, instead of the more common practice of combining the two remedies. In croup also, in lymphatic children, after the urgency of the symptoms have abated, opium to prevent spasm is often imperatively called for. In peritonitis, enteritis, diarrhoea, and dysentery, opium judiciously used is invaluable.

The forms which I myself prefer are the crude opium and the muriate of morphia.

In reference to the constipating effects of this drug upon the bowels, I do not regard it as any reason for withholding its use. In enteritis and peritonitis, it becomes often of paramount importance, while allaying pain, to ensure quietude in the intestinal tract; and not unfrequently shall we find obstinate constipation attended with, and perhaps produced by, spasm, effectually relieved by the free administration of opium. Within the last few weeks, I have witnessed the most decidedly beneficial result obtain from the exhibition of opium, in strangulated irreducible hernia, for the relief of which, neither the patient (a female, aged 64,) nor her friends, would sanction an operation. After all other measures had been adopted, by the surgeon in attendance, without avail, and repeated stercoraceous vomiting taking place, a grain of solid opium was administered every two hours, with the effect of not only allaying the vomiting, but also (after half a drachm had been taken,) of inducing free and repeated evacuation of the bowels, which function had not previously been performed for fourteen days. The patient, although relieved from the consequences of the hernia, ultimately sank from exhaustion, the friends pertinaciously refusing a *post-mortem* examination.

In thus briefly advocating the powers of opium in the treatment of internal inflammation, I must again repeat, that it is clinical observation alone that will suffice to demonstrate, in many instances, the particular time and circumstances by which its exhibition must be regulated. When calculated to benefit, the relief which it affords is often immense, while on the contrary, if given under disadvantageous conditions, its injurious effects may be irreparable.

(To be continued.)

A CASE OF DYSMENORRHOEA IN WHICH THE TINCTURE OF CANNABIS INDICA WAS EMPLOYED, WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THAT DRUG.

By BENJAMIN BARROW, Fellow of the Royal Medical-Chirurgical Society, of London.

In offering the following observations to the perusal of the profession, it must not be supposed that I consider the *usual* effects of the hemp to be those which came under my notice in the case in which I employed it, but simply that they are *some* of those which *may* occur and cause much alarm not only to the patient and friends but also to the medical attendant. It is

my desire in giving these details to put those practitioners who may not have employed the cannabis upon their guard as to its administration, for my own part I shall not again give it in any case wherein the uterus is at fault, knowing as I now do what *may happen*, and as I shall presently show, how long the uncomfortable and painful sensations about that organ may continue after its exhibition.

The Cannabis Indica, being one of those drugs, the use of which has been, I believe, very limited, and of which little is known, it may be interesting to some and useful to others of our profession to have a few particulars of the plant and preparation laid before them, as also a brief outline of the experience of those who have employed it as a medicinal remedy. I find that Dr. Pereira, to whose able work on *Materia Medica* I may refer for full information, represents the Cannabis Indica as possessing no specific qualities different from the Cannabis sativa, which is, as of course all know, the common hemp. Some botanists have, however, stated that there are certain slight differences in the growth and flowering of the plants.* The ordinary dose of the tincture prepared from these plants appears to be from ten to twenty drops; in some cases even as much as a drachm has been given, and without producing effects of any kind. Dr. Pereira, as well as others, has experimented with the drug, and witnessed various effects in different individuals, but none exactly similar to those which were present in the case I shall directly relate. The Indian hemp is mentioned as causing a very agreeable kind of delirium, augmented appetite, venereal excitement, and impaired volition, followed by insensibility, during which the patient retains any position in which he may be placed; its effects, therefore, simulate catalepsy. Dr. W. B. O'Shaughnessy, of Calcutta, has written upon this subject, and his observations upon these preparations may be consulted with advantage. He has described their effects on the animal system in health, and their utility in the treatment of tetanus and other convulsive disorders. Dr. J. Clendinning gives a favourable account of the drug, and says "its exhibition was followed with remarkably few exceptions by manifest effects as a soporific or hypnotic in conciliating sleep, as an anodyne in lulling irritation, as an antispasmodic in checking cough and cramp, and as a nervine stimulant in removing languor and anxiety. These effects were observed in both acute and chronic affections, and in patients of all ages and both sexes. It had also the advantage of not producing the injurious effects of opium. The following is a faithful record of the circumstances which attended the case which came lately under my care:—

A married lady, twenty-six years of age, of a thin spare habit, of a naturally feeble constitution, and who had suffered for some years from dysmenorrhœa, the pain at these periods being of a more than ordinary severe character, requested my attendance in consequence of the extreme suffering with which the last period was ushered in. On previous occasions, I had

only been able in any way to alleviate her sufferings, by administering very large quantities of opium or morphine, both of which remedies had been given in every form, but had become so obnoxious to my patient, inducing excessive nausea and vomiting, which frequently lasted for many subsequent days, that I determined to make trial in this instance of the tincture of the Cannabis Indica, my attention having been directed to this remedy and its use recommended, by a much valued and professional friend. I therefore immediately gave five drops for a first dose; in two hours the same quantity was again given, and in three hours five additional; so that in the course of five hours not more than fifteen drops were taken. That this quantity was not exceeded I am certain, since I took the precaution of myself dropping the doses into separate glasses before I quitted the patient. Some ease was experienced after the last dose, and I found my patient tolerably comfortable in the afternoon, but somewhat drowsy, of which I took no particular notice, knowing she had passed but a restless night.

She rose at five o'clock, and went down stairs to dinner at six, at which meal she ate about as usual, and drank one glass of wine. A degree of incoherence of manner and speech was observed by her family during the meal, and almost immediately afterwards she became violently sick and vomited, being at the same time altogether unconscious; the extremities and body became cold, and when I saw her she was perfectly pulseless, the eyes wide open and staring, the pupils somewhat contracted and quite insensible to the strongest light, with strong convulsions of the whole frame, and involuntary twitchings of the muscles, which symptoms remained for a day or two whether awake or asleep. This state of complete insensibility, I might almost say of lifelessness, lasted for about a quarter of an hour. Warm brandy and water, sal volatile, and warmth to the extremities and abdomen had the effect of recalling the circulation, and allaying the other formidable symptoms, but there remained during the whole night a partial state of unconsciousness, as also the other symptoms in a milder degree. The pulse, which varied from 100 to 140 or 150 was extremely feeble, and intermitted from time to time during the following two days.

It is unnecessary to say more of the case, than that the recovery went on progressively under the careful administration of stimulants, although the pains and uncomfortable sensations about the uterus and its appendages continued for a fortnight or longer, which I can only attribute to the medicine, as she had never suffered in a similar way at the termination of any former menstrual period. Warm baths and opium plaster over the hypogastric region, with occasional small doses of hyoscyamus with camphor mixture, tended to relieve these last remaining symptoms.

There are a few observations which it may be useful to make before concluding, but which I shall say in as few words as possible.

The subject of the above case had never suffered at any time of her life from any description of fit or cerebral affection, and her heart, so far as external

* The "Botanical Magazine," Vol. ii, N.S., gives a full description of these plants, by Dr. Hooker.

examination can prove, is free from all disease; so that the failing of the circulation so completely may fairly be attributed to the effects of the cannabis. There is one point particularly worthy of note,—viz., the length of time that the symptoms came on after the administration of the medicine; and I would ask, had she remained quiet in the recumbent position, would the more violent symptoms have been avoided? Upon all those points which appear of interest, and upon the effects which others have observed to follow the exhibition of the cannabis, I am most anxious to learn their experience; and in order to gain such information, I have been induced to lay thus at length before the readers of the *Provincial Journal*, the foregoing case and observations; and feeling, moreover, as I do, most strongly, that it is the duty of every man to give to his professional brethren the advantage of his experience, which important object this Journal is so well calculated to carry out.

Clifton, February, 1847.

CASE OF POPLITEAL ANEURISM TREATED BY COMPRESSION.

By ALBERT NAPPER, Esq., Surgeon, Guildford.

Mr. M—k, aged 70 years, a healthy looking man, of tall spare frame and temperate habits, consulted me on the 23rd of August, 1846, for a swelling in the left ham. On examination, I discovered a tumour about the size of a hen's egg, soft and yielding in the flexed position of the limb, but tense and elastic when in an extended state, and projecting considerably beyond the level of the flexor tendons. He had first noticed it about six weeks before, when it was the size of a walnut, and it had gradually increased to the present size. The land which he farms is in some parts very steep, and he attributes the injury to the strain on the limbs in climbing the hills. By careful examination, a distinct pulsation can be felt in the tumour, which becomes flaccid on compressing the femoral artery. No bellows-murmur can be detected, and the pulsation in the lower part of the femoral artery is very weak.

25th. Applied a moderately thick piece of sole leather, previously softened in hot water, over the popliteal space, extending about six inches above and below the joint, and four inches wide, and a similar piece on each side, so as to envelope the limb, with the exception of a narrow space on the upper surface, over which a bandage, sufficiently tight to obtain an exact mould of the inclosed parts. Is not to be confined, but directed to abstain from much exercise.

27th. Removed the leathers, which were well adapted to the joint; but as that covering the tumour did not appear to possess sufficient resistance, it was lined with several layers of lint, steeped in a mixture of white of egg and flour, and over that a thin piece of leather, softened in hot water, and again adjusted as before.

30th. Removed the splints; the lower one is now firm and resisting as a board, and has a complete mould of the tumour.

Sept. 1st. The splints were again removed, and the tumour found in much the same state.

6th. Finding no alteration, I determined on trying the effect of direct pressure on the tumour; I therefore placed upon the swelling several layers of lint, steeped in white of egg and flour, to the thickness of half an inch or more, and again applied the splints firmly. Up to this time he has continued to ride on horseback, but is now to be confined to the house.

8th. Tightened the bandage without removing the splints.

12th. Finding, on removal of the splints, that the compress had only had the effect of flattening the tumour, in which the pulsation is still to be felt, I determined on applying a more effectual compress. I therefore placed the half of a wine cork, split longitudinally, just above the depression in the splint, corresponding with the tumour, and covered it with lint steeped as before, in white of egg and flour, so as to obtain a direct pressure on the artery, immediately above the sack. The splints were then adjusted as before, but with the addition of three or four broad tapes with buckles, firmly stitched to the lower splint to prevent any displacement, and which I afterwards found to be much more effectual than the bandage alone. Assuming that, from the pressure already applied for the space of seventeen days, during which time the patient had not been restricted from exercise of the limb, the collateral circulation was somewhat established, I applied the splints by means of the tape straps, sufficiently tight to nearly or quite obstruct the circulation through the sac, but before leaving my patient, who resides at some distance from me, I gave instructions to his wife as to the management, in the case of the limb assuming a state of venous turgescence. He is now directed to keep the recumbent posture.

15th. Appears to be doing well. His wife informed me that within an hour after I left him on the 12th, the leg became exceedingly turgid and of a deep purple hue, accompanied with numbness and loss of temperature, but through her judicious treatment, this was subdued by slightly loosening the lower strap, and applying friction with warm fomentations. From this time no alteration was made except an occasional tightening of the straps, until—

Oct. 3rd. Removed the splints; tumour much diminished and flaccid, but no pulsation to be detected; a small vessel is felt pulsating over its surface. The ends of the cork, from being left too sharp, have produced slight excoriations of the skin. This was rectified, and the compress adjusted as before.

11th. Removed the splints; tumour much diminished; compress re-applied as before.

15th. The cork compress was now replaced with one made of tow wrapped in lint; the tumour scarcely to be felt.

18th. Continues to improve; he now walks out every day.

Nov. 27th. The leather splints producing but little inconvenience, have been worn to the present time, though I believe for the last month they have been quite unnecessary. They are now removed, and a simple bandage applied. The artery can be felt as a hard cord in the recent situation of the tumour, and the